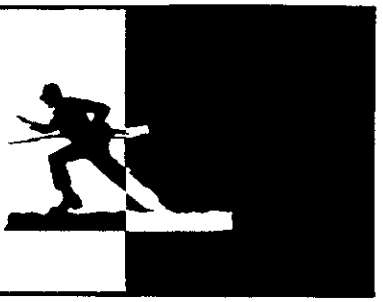
# TRAINING NOTES



# The Ranger Course

*EDITOR'S NOTE: This article, prepared by the staff of the Ranger Training Brigade, is the first in a three-part series designed to prepare Ranger candidates for their future challenge.*

*The second article will analyze the benefits of attending preparatory training and will offer a sample training outline for the establishment of a pre-Ranger training program. The third will focus on upcoming changes to the course.*

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For the past 40 years, the U.S. Army Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, has conducted Ranger training. Still, many soldiers reporting for this training are not completely aware of the rigors and challenges awaiting them.

With the outbreak of hostilities in Korea in June 1950, and after a reevaluation of World War II experience, the Army's need for Rangers became apparent. Accordingly, a Ranger training program was started at Fort Benning in October 1950. The headquarters detachment was titled the Ranger Training Command.

These first Rangers were taught to infiltrate enemy lines, to move rapidly and quietly, and to maneuver and fight by day or by night on all types of terrain.

Physical toughness, conditioning, and foot marching were integral parts of the training. The stated goal was to prepare a company to move from 40 to 50 miles cross country in 12 to 18 hours, depending on the terrain. Additionally, Rangers took all of the tests for the Expert Infantryman's Badge, and those who succeeded were awarded EIBs in addition to Ranger tabs on graduation day.

On 22 October 1951, the Office of the Chief of Army Field Forces published a directive entitled "Establishment of Ranger Courses at the Infantry School." The new emphasis was to be on individual training, and the Ranger Training Command became the Ranger Department of the School. The training of Ranger Class Number 1, consisting of 81 students, was conducted from 7 January to 1 March 1952.

## LEADERSHIP COURSE

In the following years, the Ranger Course developed a widespread reputation as the armed services' premier leadership course. After Operation URGENT FURY in October 1983, and with the return of light infantry divisions to the Army's force structure, the demand for Ranger-qualified leaders was greater than ever.

A need to reorganize the structure of the Ranger Department became clear when the field demanded more than 3,000 slots per year in the Ranger Course. Accordingly, the Ranger Department was reorganized and designated the Ranger Training Brigade (RTB) on 2 December 1987.

The RTB currently consists of the 4th Ranger Training Battalion at Fort Benning; the 5th Ranger Training Battalion at Camp Frank Merrill, Dahlonega, Georgia; the 6th Ranger Training Battalion at Camp James Rudder, Eglin AFB, Florida; and the 7th Ranger Training Battalion at Dugway Proving Ground, Utah.

The Ranger Course, 65 days in length, is divided into the Benning Phase, the Mountain Phase, the Florida Phase, and the Desert Phase. (See the four-part series describing each phase in *Soldiers* magazine, October 1990, November 1990, December 1990, and January 1991.)

The purpose of today's Ranger Course is still remarkably similar to the initial design: In an ideal sense, its purpose is to produce a hardened, competent, small unit leader who is absolutely confident that he can lead his unit into combat and overcome all obstacles to accomplish his unit's mission.

The Ranger Course identifies and further develops leaders who are physically and mentally tough, self-disciplined, highly motivated and committed, who enforce high standards and are able to think, act, and react effectively in stressful situations that approach (and possibly exceed) that found in combat.

The course is designed as an individual leadership course for Army leaders, principally infantry and other combat arms leaders. The course is also open to other branch and service members who meet the prerequisites.

The RTB is programmed to run 12 classes a year, each with a stated course load of 258 students (3,096 annually), although the Infantry School has routinely accepted up to 310 students per class (3,720 annually). During Fiscal Year 1990 course attendance decreased because of the number of units deployed to support Operation DESERT STORM, and the RTB trained a total of 2,904 officers and enlisted personnel. Of the 1,749 officers, 52 percent were infantry, 21 percent from the other combat arms, and 28 percent a mixture of other branches. Of the 1,155 enlisted personnel, 81 percent were in CMF 11, 6 percent in other combat arms, and 13 percent other branches.

Before being enrolled in the Ranger Course, a student must meet the following entrance criteria:

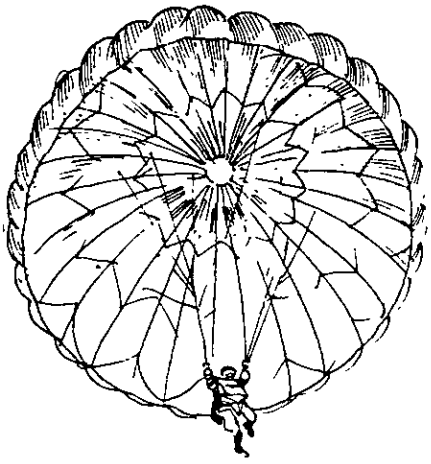
- Pass the Army Physical Fitness Test (APFT) in accordance with Field Manual 21-20 with a minimum score of 52 pushups, 62 situps, 14 minutes, 54 seconds or less for the two-mile run, and 6 chinups.
- Pass the Combat Water Survival Test (CWST) consisting of a 15-meter swim, equipment removal, and three-meter drop.
- Have no limiting physical profile.
- Have a current medical examination stamped "Ranger" and dated within 18 months of the start date for the class.
- Produce verification of panorex.

In addition, soldiers who have suffered previous heat or cold injuries are not enrolled in summer or winter classes, respectively. And students who are allergic to bee and wasp stings are not enrolled without prior treatment.

Of the 3,537 students who reported to the Ranger Course in FY 1990, 587 (17 percent) failed to meet these standards and were not enrolled. Most of these—303—failed to meet the APFT standard (predominately for pushups); 199 failed the CWST (principally the 15-meter swim); and 64 were allergic to bee or wasp stings. The rest had medical or administrative problems.

Students who are not enrolled are offered an opportunity to recycle to the next class if they are willing and their units authorize it. These soldiers then undergo an intensive training program that targets their individual weaknesses. It has been our experience that after completing this program, most of the soldiers do successfully meet the entrance requirements.

High attrition has been a by-product of the Ranger Course since its inception. For example, Ranger Class 1 in 1952 had a 42 percent attrition rate. Although some periods have reflected lower



attrition than others, when the modern course was expanded to four phases and the student load was increased to above 3,000, the attrition figures rose to around the initial course results. The attrition rate for FY 1989, for example, was 38 percent and for FY 1990, 40 percent.

In FY 1990, 1,180 students were relieved (dropped) from the course because of failures in eight categories:

**CWST.** As mentioned previously, those who fail the CWST are not enrolled but are offered a recycle opportunity. Those who fail a second time are relieved from the course.

**Land Navigation.** Students who fail land navigation are retested. If they fail the retest, they are given a recycle opportunity. Those who fail land navigation in the next cycle are relieved from the course.

**APFT.** As with the CWST, students who fail the APFT on recycle are relieved from the course.

**Ranger Run.** During the Benning Phase four runs of 5, 3, 4, and 4 miles are conducted at an 8-minute per mile pace on a moderately rolling hard-surface route. Soldiers who fail the five-mile run or any two of the other runs are given recycle opportunities. Those who fail runs in the next cycle are relieved.

**Lack of Motivation.** Students who voluntarily quit the course are permanently relieved unless an officer in the rank of colonel or above in their chain of command obtains a waiver from the Ranger Training Brigade commander.

**Medical.** Students who miss more than 72 hours of training throughout the course are offered a recycle opportunity. Students who have medical problems that require more than 10 days recovery time are relieved. (Medical problems are difficult to assess objectively.) The Benning Phase has an extremely high medical attrition rate, partly due to a lack of individual resolve; many consider a medical drop as an honorable way out of the course.

**Training Deficiencies.** Students who fail to meet the standards for peer evaluations, patrols, or spot reports in any phase are given a recycle opportunity in that phase. Those who fail that phase again are relieved. No more than two recycles are allowed, except for medical recycles.

Attrition is relatively high, but the Ranger standards are maintained. The best way for a unit to reduce its attrition rate is home station screening—to select highly motivated, committed Ranger candidates—and rigorous physical preparation.

To be fully prepared to attend the course, every student should review the following documents:

- SH (Student Handout) 21-75, The Ranger Course Pamphlet, dated September 1989.
- SH 21-76, The Ranger Handbook, dated June 1988.
- The Ranger Challenge video, a 16-minute tape that explains each phase of the course. (This tape is provided to

all Infantry Pre-Command Course students while they are at Fort Benning.)

In preparing soldiers to attend the Ranger Course, there is no substitute for leader training in the parent unit. As an example, in comparing students who had pre-ranger training with those who had not, current figures indicate that at least 13 percent more of those who had had this training passed prerequisite testing, and that at least 13 percent more of those with pre-training successfully passed the course. A more thorough screening and pre-training by the chain of command will go a long way toward laying a foundation for success.

The Ranger Course continues to produce tough, confident leaders who are capable of pushing themselves to the limit of physical endurance. Course graduates are prepared to live up to the Ranger motto so valiantly earned by the 5th Ranger Battalion on D-Day 1944: *Rangers Lead the Way.*

# Understanding Fire Support

**CAPTAIN JONATHAN D. THOMPSON**

Field artillery is undoubtedly the infantry's most important source of fire support. It is therefore essential that each branch understand the way the other functions. Unfortunately, though, many company grade officers of both branches know little about the other. This lack of understanding and experience prevents both the maneuver company commander and the fire support officer (FSO) from taking full advantage of the fire support means available.

In an effort to improve understanding on both sides, the Infantry School at Fort Benning, Georgia, and the Field Artillery School at Fort Sill, Oklahoma, have started a program in which graduates of the Infantry Officer Advanced Course (IOAC) attend a portion of the Field Artillery Officer Advanced Course (FAOAC).

An Infantry officer attending FAOAC explains maneuver doctrine and tactics to the Field Artillery officers as they prepare their orders. To do this, he fills a staff position such as the S-2 and advises the student S-3 during the planning. In exchange, he receives a full understanding of what fire support can do for him. As a result, when he becomes a company commander and a battalion staff officer, he will be far better able to integrate fires into a maneuver plan.

While at Fort Sill, the Infantry officers go through the small group instruction (SGI) phase, which lasts 12 weeks. This instruction focuses on preparing Field Artillery officers to serve as battery commanders and battalion and brigade FSOs. A Field Artillery major leads each small group, which consists of 15 to 18 students.

The small group leader teaches primarily through practical exercises in which the students receive a tactical scenario and then use the estimate process to develop a five-paragraph operations order. While this process is similar to that in IOAC, the FAOAC concentrates more on battalion and brigade level orders.

I attended FAOAC as a member of the second test group to participate in the program. The course taught me several important lessons. While these lessons are not new, they may serve as reminders for future company commanders who have had no combat experience.

**Fire support is the maneuver commander's responsibility.** Of course, at company level, the fire support officer will advise the maneuver commander and coordinate fires. This lesson implies two things. First, the maneuver commander must know the language of fire support. *(See "The Language of Fire Support," Lieutenant Colonel Robert D. Sander, INFANTRY, March-April 1990, pages 21-24.)* Secondly, the FSO must understand maneuver tactics, control measures, and terms. Since a company FSO is usually a junior Field Artillery lieutenant with little or no experience with maneuver forces, the commander should sit down with him before they go to the field to make sure they understand each other.

The commander's next step is to explain his scheme of maneuver to the FSO and the way he wants the available fires to support it. This results in the commander's concept for fires, which the FSO will write in the Fires paragraph of the operations order. The FSO can then plan the use of supporting fires to assist the commander in accomplishing his mission.

The commander's responsibilities do not end with the planning phase. He also needs to include the FSO and the fire plan into all rehearsals. During the battle, he needs to ensure that the FSO executes fire missions when and where